

# National Landscape Conservation System Public Outreach Plan

**Current Date:** July 20, 2009

**Project:** Treasured Landscapes of the National Landscape Conservation System

**Treas·ured** (trĕzh'ərd) *tr. v.* **1.** To keep or regard as precious; value highly. **2.** To accumulate and store away.

**Land·scape** (lānd'skāp') *n.* **1.** An expanse of scenery that can be seen in a single view. **2.** A picture depicting an expanse of scenery. **3.** The branch of art dealing with the representation of natural scenery. **4.** The aspect of the land characteristic of a particular region. **5.** An extensive mental view; an interior prospect.

**Background:** How does the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) define “treasured landscape”? The National Landscape Conservation System (NLCS), of course. Managed by the BLM as part of its National System of Public Lands, the NLCS is composed of National Monuments, National Conservation Areas and similarly designated lands, Wilderness and Wilderness Study Areas, Wild and Scenic Rivers, National Scenic and Historic Trails, and the Conservation Lands of the California Desert. Regarded as “precious” yet not to be “accumulated and stored away,” these treasured landscapes are located coast-to-coast and include 886 federally recognized areas, approximately 27 million acres, and 8,419 miles of rivers and national trails. Learn more about these areas at <http://www.blm.gov/nlcs>.

Created in 2000 by the Secretary of the Interior, the NLCS brought into a single system specially designated areas managed on a landscape level under the BLM’s multiple-use mandate. Recent passage of the Omnibus Public Lands Management Act (P.L. 111-11) provided a statutory basis for the NLCS. The NLCS exists to conserve, protect, and restore nationally significant areas recognized for their exceptional scientific, cultural, ecological, historical, and recreational resources.

Many of these treasured landscapes are some of America’s best kept secrets, yet are just minutes from major metropolitan areas. Others are rugged and remote, offering solitude in a primitive backcountry setting. Units of the NLCS are uniquely diverse, including red-rock deserts, rugged ocean coastlines, deep river canyons, and broad Alaskan tundra. Many serve as outdoor scientific laboratories where important cultural, paleontological, and other scientific discoveries are common place, ranging from the Nation’s highest concentration of Native American artifacts to the Nation’s premier paleontological sites. The year 2010 marks the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the NLCS, and several events are planned to celebrate the milestone and reinforce the value of these landscapes to their local, regional, and national communities (Learn more at <http://www.blm.gov/NLCS>).

**Communications Goal:** The diversity of the NLCS units provides a unique communication challenge, as the BLM strives to meet the NLCS mission of conservation

of these diverse landscapes. Building a broad base of support among a variety of constituencies, with sometimes conflicting interests, is crucial for the long-term success of the NLCS. To succeed, the BLM must provide an overarching vision of the NLCS to local, regional, and national constituencies to build support and increase public awareness.

## **Objectives and Related Messages:**

### ***Internal objectives***

- To increase BLM employees' awareness and support of the NLCS as an integral part of the BLM and its multiple-use mandate.
- To increase BLM employees' understanding of how these treasured landscapes are unique to the BLM and why they are important.
- To increase BLM employees' ability and willingness to communicate NLCS priorities and messages to critical audiences.
- To increase NLCS staff's ability to integrate and understand other BLM program areas to improve partnerships, build synergy, and educate others about the NLCS program.
- To increase the NLCS's recognition as a permanent and legal system of treasured landscapes with a specific purpose and not isolated units.
- To counter misconceptions that the NLCS diverts funding and staffing resources from BLM programs.
- To increase DOI managers' awareness and support of the NLCS as part of DOI's overall mission and how these treasured landscapes are unique to the BLM.

### ***Internal key messages***

- Treasured landscapes of the NLCS are specially designated and managed on a landscape level to conserve, protect, and restore their exceptional scientific, natural, cultural, ecological, historical, and recreational resources.
- The NLCS remains under the multiple-use mandate of the BLM. Motorized recreation and grazing may be allowed, and valid existing rights are recognized, meaning that oil and gas development may occur if allowed by the law and a Resource Management Plan.
- On March 25, 2009, the Omnibus Public Lands Management Act (P.L. 111-11) was passed by Congress. The legislation, signed by the President on March 30, 2009, provided a statutory basis for the NLCS.
- The WO can provide tools and messages for employees to use in discussing NLCS issues and priorities.
- Increasing awareness of the NLCS can help increase awareness of all BLM programs.
- Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar is committed to preserving America's treasured landscapes. The BLM's management of the NLCS is a critical part of this commitment.



***External interest groups and community partners objectives***

- To increase awareness, recognition, and appreciation of the NLCS and its management.
- To increase understanding of how treasured landscapes are unique to the BLM and important to America.
- To improve the BLM's image by emphasizing that the NLCS is part of the BLM's multiple-use mission, but with an emphasis on conservation.
- To increase volunteerism to expand public lands stewardship.

***External interest groups and community partners key messages***

- The NLCS encompasses many of the Nation's most notable landscapes, providing important recreation opportunities and economic benefits for local, regional, and national communities.
- NLCS units, a vital part of the BLM's National System of Public Lands, are managed on a landscape level to conserve, protect, and restore their exceptional scientific, cultural, ecological, historical, and recreational resources.
- Lands managed within the NLCS are places where one can discover these specially protected resources on their own through self-directed discovery.
- The NLCS remains under the multiple-use mandate of the BLM. Motorized recreation and grazing may be allowed, and valid existing rights are recognized, meaning that oil and gas development may occur if allowed by the law and a Resource Management Plan.
- NLCS projects cannot be achieved without the help of hundreds of volunteers, working thousands of hours—340,000 in 2008 alone. These volunteers sacrifice free time to work closely with BLM staff on improving the public lands they love.
- The NLCS offers a wide variety of uses, and many areas serve as outdoor scientific laboratories where important discoveries are common place, ranging from the Nation's highest concentration of Native American artifacts to the Nation's premier paleontological sites.
- While Wilderness and Wilderness Study Areas provide solitude and a primitive backcountry experience, other areas are open to activities ranging from scientific research to motorized recreation.
- No other Federal agency manages such nationally significant areas, designated by either Congress or the President, on a landscape level with such limited resources. Treasured landscapes are truly unique to the BLM's National System of Public Lands, which includes the NLCS.
- The BLM management costs per acre are the lowest among Federal land-managing agencies. They average \$5.86 compared to \$17.68 for the U.S. Forest Service, \$12.13 for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and \$31.34 for the National Park Service.

- BLM welcomes your interest and input into the management of these lands.

***External government groups objectives***

- To increase awareness, recognition, and appreciation of the NLCS and its management.
- To increase understanding of how treasured landscapes are unique to the BLM and important to America.
- To improve the BLM's image by emphasizing that the NLCS is part of the BLM's multiple-use mission, but with an emphasis on conservation.
- To increase understanding of economic contributions made by the National System of Public Lands, which includes the NLCS, to nearby communities.
- To develop an open and honest working relationship at all levels so that when questions or issues arise, external government groups and the BLM collaborate to obtain answers, clarifications, and resolution of any issues.

***External government groups key messages***

- The NLCS encompasses many of the Nation's most notable landscapes, providing important recreation opportunities and economic benefits for local, regional, and national communities.
- NLCS units, a vital part of the BLM's National System of Public Lands, are on a landscape level to conserve, protect, and restore their exceptional scientific, cultural, ecological, historical, and recreational resources.
- The NLCS remains under the multiple-use mandate of the BLM. Motorized recreation and grazing may be allowed, and valid existing rights are recognized, meaning that oil and gas development may occur if allowed by the law and a Resource Management Plan.
- The BLM values its partnerships with gateway communities. The NLCS and local visitor centers benefit from volunteerism and public lands stewardship, and in turn, visitors to public lands contribute to local economies.
- The treasured landscapes of the NLCS benefit from collaboration and community stewardship among gateway communities; non-governmental organizations; tribal, state, and local governments; other Federal agencies; and the BLM.
- No other Federal agency manages such nationally significant areas, designated by either Congress or the President, on a landscape level with such limited resources. Treasured landscapes are truly unique to the BLM's National System of Public Lands, which includes the NLCS.
- The BLM management costs per acre are the lowest among Federal land-managing agencies. They average \$5.86 compared to \$17.68 for the U.S. Forest Service, \$12.13 for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and \$31.34 for the National Park Service.

- Public lands, including the NLCS, contribute to the economic vitality of our Nation. More than 58 million people live within 25 miles of BLM-managed lands, providing them with open space and outdoor adventure.
- In fiscal year 2008, volunteers contributed more than 340,000 hours to the NLCS — labor valued at more than \$6.5 million — building trails, mending fences, eradicating invasive weeds, and providing visitor services.

### ***Media objectives***

- To increase the number of positive stories about the NLCS and the challenges the BLM meets in managing the system in targeted media outlets.
- Define the NLCS, and explain how treasured landscapes are unique to the BLM and why they are important to your audiences.
- Prepare a media kit that includes B roll, feature stories, maps, statistics, and other information for use in media outreach at all levels.

### ***Media messages***

- NLCS units, a vital part of the BLM's National System of Public Lands, are managed on a landscape level to conserve, protect, and restore their exceptional scientific, cultural, ecological, historical, and recreational resources.
- Created administratively in 2000 by the Secretary of the Interior, the NLCS brought into a single system treasured landscapes managed under the BLM's multiple-use mandate.
- Located coast-to-coast, 886 federally recognized areas, approximately 27 million acres, and 8,419 miles of rivers and national trails are managed for multiple use with an emphasis on conservation. Learn more about these areas at <http://www.blm.gov/nlcs>.
- The NLCS is composed of National Monuments, National Conservation Areas and similarly designated lands, Wilderness and Wilderness Study Areas, Wild and Scenic Rivers, and National Scenic and Historic Trails, and the Conservation Lands of the California Desert.
- No other Federal agency manages such nationally significant areas, designated by either Congress or the President, on a landscape level with such limited resources. Treasured landscapes are truly unique to the BLM's National System of Public Lands, which includes the NLCS.
- The BLM management costs per acre are the lowest among Federal land-managing agencies. They average \$5.86 compared to \$17.68 for the U.S. Forest Service, \$12.13 for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and \$31.34 for the National Park Service.
- From outstanding recreational opportunities to working landscapes where grazing and other traditional uses of the land take place, the NLCS captures the spirit of America's rich heritage.

**Key Contacts:** Carl Rountree, NLCS Director

## **National Landscape Conservation System Talking Points**

- Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar is committed to preserving America's treasured landscapes. The Bureau of Land Management's management of the National Landscape Conservation System (NLCS) is a critical part of this commitment.
- The NLCS is composed of National Monuments, National Conservation Areas and similarly designated lands, Wilderness and Wilderness Study Areas, Wild and Scenic Rivers, and National Scenic and Historic Trails, and the Conservation Lands of the California Desert.
- Created in 2000 by the Secretary of the Interior, the NLCS brought into a single system treasured landscapes managed under the BLM's multiple-use mandate. Located coast-to-coast, 886 federally recognized areas, approximately 27 million acres, and 8,419 miles of rivers and national trails await discovery. Learn more about these areas at <http://www.blm.gov/nlcs>.
- NLCS projects cannot be achieved without the help of hundreds of volunteers, working thousands of hours—340,000 in 2008 alone. These volunteers sacrifice their free time to work closely with BLM staff on improving the public lands they love.
- On March 25, 2009, the Omnibus Public Lands Management Act (P.L. 111-11) was passed by Congress. The legislation, signed by the President on March 30, 2009, provided a statutory basis for the NLCS.
- Treasured landscapes of the NLCS are specially designated and managed to conserve, protect, and restore their exceptional scientific, natural, cultural, ecological, historical, and recreational resources.
- The treasured landscapes of the NLCS benefit from collaboration and community stewardship among gateway communities; non-governmental organizations; tribal, state, and local governments; other Federal agencies; and the BLM.
- Public lands contribute to the economic vitality of our Nation. More than 58 million people live within 25 miles of BLM-managed lands, providing them with open space and outdoor adventure.
- In fiscal year 2008, volunteers contributed more than 340,000 hours to the NLCS — labor valued at more than \$6.5 million — building trails, mending fences, eradicating invasive weeds, and providing visitor services.
- The NLCS is just one aspect of the BLM's multiple-use mission. The National System of Public Lands provides for other nationally vital programs through rights-

of-way for energy transmission corridors, wild horse and burro areas, and energy development, including renewable energy.

- Through educational opportunities and on-the-ground projects, America's youth play an integral role in the conservation and restoration of public lands within the NLCS.
- The BLM must continue balancing sometimes conflicting interests while managing lands within the NLCS to conserve, protect, and restore their extraordinary resources.
- Many of our Nation's most treasured public lands provide convenient open space on a landscape scale to millions of Americans, offering unique opportunities for myriad outdoor adventures for young and old alike.
- Even if they never visit public lands within the NLCS, Americans can gain a sense of connection to wild and often remote landscapes that are intrinsic parts of their heritage.
- No other Federal agency manages such nationally significant areas, designated by either Congress or the President, on a landscape level. Treasured landscapes are truly unique to the BLM's National System of Public Lands, which includes the NLCS.
- While important scientific discoveries were made on these lands long before the NLCS was created, these treasured landscapes have produced recent discoveries important to understanding and managing complex landscapes. The NLCS holds immense opportunities for tomorrow's great scientific discoveries.
- BLM Resource Advisory Councils, NLCS Advisory Committees, Friends Groups, and other partners are critical to the BLM in carrying out its conservation vision and priority programs for the NLCS. The BLM salutes these important volunteers.
- Since the system's establishment, NLCS priorities have grown and evolved, guided by community-based Resource Management Plans. Priorities for these treasured landscapes include conservation, protection, and restoration; communities and partnerships; science; natural; cultural, ecological, historical, and recreation values; and visitor services.
- In managing NLCS resources, the BLM relies on partnerships, local community involvement, and scientific research. Research findings and lessons for managing partnerships have been applied to other public lands managed by the BLM.
- Managed for conservation with local communities engaged to help conserve, protect, and restore these treasured landscapes, the NLCS supports a wide variety of uses under the BLM's multiple-use mandate.
- Uses can vary, but many units support traditional activities such as Native American cultural and religious uses, hunting, and livestock grazing. Oil and gas development may be allowed where there are valid existing rights.



- Many areas serve as outdoor scientific laboratories where important discoveries are common place, ranging from the Nation’s highest concentration of Native American artifacts to the Nation’s premier paleontological sites. Abundant cultural and paleontological resources provide a window into our past.
- Public lands and waterways within the NLCS offer a wide variety of uses to the American public. While Wilderness and Wilderness Study Areas provide solitude and a primitive backcountry experience, other areas are open to activities ranging from scientific research to motorized recreation.
- While national trail corridors are not withdrawn from energy development, the BLM strives to avoid, minimize, and mitigate detrimental activities in those areas.
- The BLM values its partnerships with gateway communities, which support the NLCS and local visitor centers through volunteerism and public lands stewardship.
- The BLM seeks to nurture geotourism, or tourism that sustains or enhances the geographical character of a place—its environment, culture, aesthetics, heritage, and the well-being of its residents—to benefit NLCS resources.

## National Landscape Conservation System Fact Sheet



**What:** The National Landscape Conservation System (NLCS), managed by the Bureau of Land Management as part of its National System of Public Lands, is composed of National Monuments, National Conservation Areas and similarly designated lands, Wilderness and Wilderness Study Areas, Wild and Scenic Rivers, and National Scenic and Historic Trails, and the Conservation Lands of the California Desert. While the system was created in 2000 by the Secretary of the Interior, new units within the system can only be designated by Congress or the President. The Omnibus Public Lands Management Act of 2009 (P.L. 111-11) was signed by the President on March 30, 2009, providing a statutory basis for the NLCS. With this Act, 928,000 acres of Wilderness, one National Monument, four National Conservation Areas, 367 miles of Wild and Scenic Rivers, and 40 miles of National Scenic and Historic Trails were added to the NLCS. The system now contains 886 units, approximately 27 million acres, and 8,425 miles of rivers and national trails located in 11 Western States, Alaska, Maryland, and Florida. Learn more about these areas at <http://www.blm.gov/nlcs>.

<i>National Landscape Conservation System at a Glance</i>				
Category*	Areas	Number	BLM Acres	BLM Miles
<b>National Monuments and National Conservation Areas</b>	National Monuments	16	4,815,760	
	National Conservation Areas	16	4,112,798	
	Similar Designations	5	435,829	
<b>Wilderness</b>	Wilderness Areas	222	8,662,214	
	Wilderness Study Areas	545	12,790,291	
<b>Wild and Scenic Rivers</b>		67	1,164,014	2,419
<b>Trails</b>	National Historic Trails	10		5,342
	National Scenic Trails	5		664
<b>Totals</b>		886	Approximately 27,000,000**	8,425

\*In 2009-2010, the BLM will evaluate how to incorporate the California Desert Conservation Area (CDCA) into the NLCS in terms of management. The BLM-administered portion of the CDCA (including Wilderness Areas) totals 10,671,080 acres and includes some multiple-use areas not traditionally incorporated into the NLCS.

\*\*Some NLCS units overlap. Because of these overlaps, it is not possible to arrive at an acreage total for all NLCS units simply by adding the acreage total for each category listed above (e.g., National Monuments and National Conservation Areas, Wilderness, etc.).

**Why:** The NLCS provides a science- and conservation-based framework for managing the BLM's specially designated areas encompassing vast treasured landscapes as part of the BLM's multiple-use mission.

**How:** Under the BLM's multiple-use mandate, these specially designated public lands are managed to conserve, protect, and restore their exceptional scientific, natural, cultural, ecological, historical, and recreational resources.

The NLCS vision focuses on four priorities:

- 1) Conservation, protection, and restoration;
- 2) Science;

- 3) Communities and partnerships, including economic and social concerns; and
- 4) Recreation, education, and visitor services.

**Challenges:** A few of the critical factors facing the unique treasured landscapes found within the NLCS are:

- Impacts from prolonged drought, wildland fires, invasive species, and noxious weeds.
- Meeting the variety of visitor interests, needs, and expectations.
- Availability of commercial services for visitors to NLCS units.

The biggest challenge for the BLM in managing the NLCS is balancing sometimes conflicting interests while managing these treasured landscapes to conserve, protect, and restore the extraordinary resources for which they were designated.

**Partnerships and Volunteers:** The NLCS continues to expand its capacity to create innovative solutions, build sustainable partnerships, and accomplish on-the-ground projects by involving communities, volunteers, and partners to assist in managing landscapes. In 2008, BLM staff partnered with more than 450 tribes, non-governmental organizations, state and local governments, and other Federal agencies across the country. In fiscal year 2008, volunteers contributed more than 340,000 hours to the NLCS — labor valued at more than \$6.5 million — building trails, mending fences, eradicating invasive weeds, and providing visitor services. The BLM leverages volunteer services and partnerships at an estimated 20:1 ratio to benefit NLCS resources.

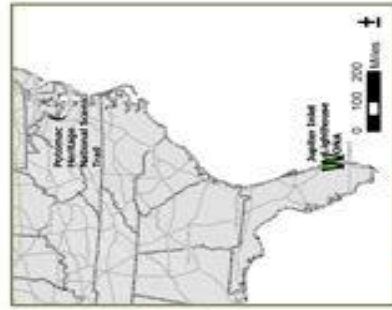
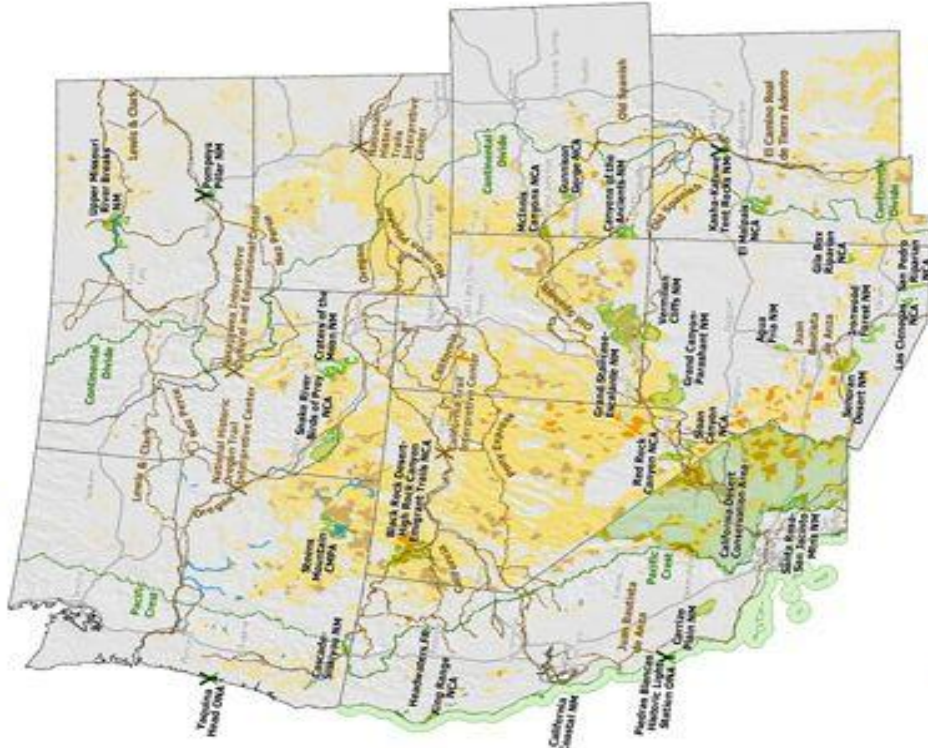
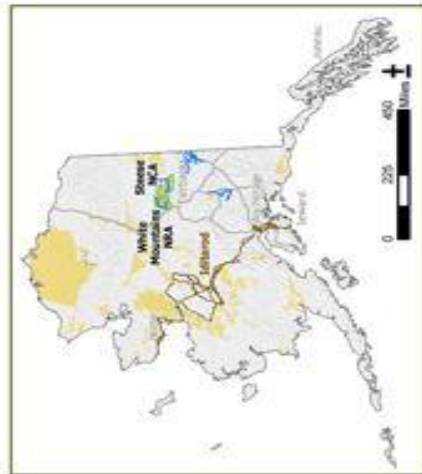
**Goals Going Forward:** The BLM works hard, with the assistance of partners, to preserve the NLCS's natural landscapes, as well as those across jurisdictions. In concert with Resource Management Plans, goals going forward include:

- Developing needed policy and guidance;
- Expanding partnerships throughout the system;
- Initiating a system-wide review of existing management of the NLCS, including supporting regional assessments related to climate change; and
- Increasing emphasis on scientific research.

For more information, go to <http://www.blm.gov/nlcs>.

# National Landscape Conservation System

**Mission:**  
To conserve,  
protect, and  
restore nationally  
significant land-  
scapes recognized  
for their cultural,  
ecological, and  
scientific values  
for the American  
public.



## Landscapes of the American Spirit

NLCS staff updating map, contingent upon receipt of new data from the field.